20: Hart E-5 (1951) 1954 OA1 Philippines
Central Bisayan OA14

PREFACE

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It is difficult not to become sentimental or to lose one's perspective in writing about a group of people with whom one has lived for many months, spending seven days a week studying their culture. This is particularly true of the barriofolk of Caticugan whose friendship and hospitality I enjoyed for nearly a year. Looking back now I can see how often I must have disrupted their daily schedules to ask my questions or make my kinship charts. Many times the last egg in the nest or the biggest piece of chicken in the pot was forced upon me by people who themselves had little to eat. My questioning of and participation in various activities must have become tiring and, at times embarrassing to many of the people, yet rarely was I treated discourteously.

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I doubt that any American could live in Caticugan for the same period that I did and not come to realize that these people, the Filipinos, represented the "vital core" of the country; elemental source of the Philippine's spiritual strength and material wealth. Mr. Pio Pedrosa, president of the Philippine National Bank, in his commencement address at the University of the Philippines (1953), said what we both think is the basic problem of his country:

government which is nourished by social injustices and tenancy problems common in many parts of the rural Philippines.[23] During 1951 the peaceful conditions of Negros were never disturbed by this dissident movement. 121

Sixth, a barrio was desired in which the land use pattern was not plantation agriculture. Though plantation (sugar) agriculture is the typical land utilization in most of Negros Occidental province, it is not for the Visayas as a whole. As for tenancy, Negros Oriental province comes close to the national averages. Whereas corn is the major food of most Visayans, I wished to locate in a barrio in which rice culture also could be studied.

Seventh, I sought a barrio near enough to the sea to permit a survey of fishing activities. For this purpose two sitios were selected, Baybay and Malabuhan.

Siaton municipality was first suggested by Professor Timoteo Oracion, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Silliman University. Professor Oracion, a native of Negros Oriental, knew the municipality well and recommended it as an excellent area for study of a barrio. The first trip to Siaton was made in the company [123] of Professor Oracion who introduced me to his friends and the municipal officials. A second trip was made about a week later after I had discussed the municipality with

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[23] For a recent account of the Hukbalahap movement vide Luis Taruc, Born of the People. New York, International Publishers, 1953. Taruc is one of the founders and leaders of this movement.

various individuals in Dumaguete. After the second visit Siaton was tentatively selected. I decided to stay in the poblacion for several weeks. If the desired type of barrio was not found, I planned to move to southern Bohol where I had located another possible barrio for study. 125

After two weeks Caticugan appeared to be ideal for my purposes--a decision which I never regretted. After locating in the poblacion I met Mr. Juan Cadiane who had a manuscript history of the general area of Siaton and also found an unusually capable interpreter, Mr. Dioscoro Ragay. I finally decided it was unnecessary to move from the poblacion to Caticugan, as I had previously planned, once I had selected a barrio. As time passed it became obvious that the advantages of living in Siaton poblacion, a ten-minute walk from Caticugan, outweighed the disadvantages. I made frequent visits to Caticugan in the evening, often staying overnight with friends. It soon became apparent that little activity occurred in the barrio at night except for dances, funeral wakes and certain religious events of which I knew in advance. Since most of the barriofolk retired with the sun, it would have been difficult to have worked after darkness. 124 123

At the start I spent most of my time explaining to the people in the poblacion, and later in the barrio, the purposes of my residence. I told the people that I wished to learn Cebuano. I had decided to live in a rural area

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rather than a city because I was also interested in studying agricultural conditions. Rumors, however, grew around my presence: I was a deserter from the American army, hiding from the military police, a rich American on a vacation or business man looking for investment opportunities. After a month I was able to move around the barrio without causing much excitement. I suspect I became a sort of necessary nuisance, as Malinowski phrased it, mitigated by a rather abundant distribution of free cigarettes!

This beginning period in the poblacion, with visits to the surrounding area, proved to be a valuable investment of time. First, news about the Americano quickly spread throughout the locality, so when I appeared for the first time in the barrios, I did not arrive as a total stranger. Second, it was during this period that I "tried out" several candidates as an interpreter. Since I needed an interpreter who spoke English, this meant I had to become acquainted with the young men living in the poblacion. Third, I was able to begin the study of the dialect with the English-speaking residents of the poblacion.

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My interpreter, Mr. Dioscoro Ragay, was a stocky, energetic young man of thirty-three years, the father of three children. He was born in Zamboanguita poblacion but had lived most of his life in Siaton. He had spent nearly two years at Silliman University and had taught school in both Sandolot and Caticugan. During the war,

Coring (his nickname), had been a respected guerrilla in southern Negros and later imprisoned by the Japanese. When I arrived in Siaton, he was working as a clerk in the municipio (the building which contains the offices of the municipal officials), a job which paid him a pittance. 115

Coring's father was the municipal sanitary inspector. His wife's family lived in Caticugan which was a distinct advantage to me. Coring was patient, interested in the work (though never as interested as I probably unreasonably hoped he would become) and gave me valuable advice. He was respected and liked by the barriofolk for his keen wit and warm friendly nature.

Each day Coring and I went to Caticugan around seven in the morning, returning to the poblacion in the early afternoon when the barriofolk took their daily siesta.[24] Often we revisited the barrio in the late afternoon; otherwise we examined municipal or church records, interviewed informants in the poblacion, or visited the fishing sitios at Baybay or Malabuhan. During the evenings I revised and typed my notes or attended a funeral wake, talked with the people at the guhang booths in the poblacion, or visited Caticugan when some special event was held. 123

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[24]In the beginning the work schedule was seven days a week for several months until I realized such a routine was unfair to Coring's family and reduced it to six days a week.

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The techniques of research included controlled and uncontrolled interviewing, taking of life histories from informants in both the barrio and poblacion, and participant observation. The unaffected graciousness and hospitality of nearly all of the barriofolk made it a pleasant experience to participate in most barrio functions. Information was gathered and checked with regard to sex and age of individuals, barrio farmers and civil officials in the poblacion. It was difficult to establish close rapport with the shy dalagas (young unmarried women) of the barrio, mainly because a platonic relationship between an unmarried man and woman was generally believed to be almost impossible. However, several dalagas were most helpful in giving me information. First-aid equipment, sulfa for treating tropical ulcers, medicine for malaria, and services to the barriofolk who usually willingly accepted assistance, made things easier.

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Eight life histories were obtained from the residents of Caticugan and Siaton poblacion. Two men living in the poblacion wrote their biographies, one in English and the other in Cebuano. Later I went over the life histories with the authors, asking them to elaborate on certain points of interest or to clarify vague statements. The other life histories, three men and three women, I recorded during interview sessions. I was able to collect these biographies without paying my informants for their time. In one case an active and

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the resources available, cross-comparison of various fish or medicinal plants used elsewhere in the archipelago, and facilitated obtaining their English name.

Special attention was given to mapping as much data as possible. Since no large scale map of Barrio Caticugan existed, a base map was made, using the pace method. Other maps were obtained and corrected or the data augmented when desirable. The drawings in this study were first sketched in pencil and then shown to the barriofolk to check the names of the different parts or variation in types. Then the final sketches were made on the basis of these criticisms.

Care was taken to check the spelling and meaning of all the dialect terms used in this study. A card dictionary of about 500 terms was made in which the word (or phrase) and its meaning were recorded. This card dictionary was then passed among a number of school teachers in the poblacion with the following instructions: "Is this word (phrase) spelled correctly? Is the word defined correctly? Are there additional meanings for the word?" The various corrections and additions were compared and consolidated in the dictionary.

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I never became so proficient in Cebuano that I could entirely dispense with the services of my interpreter. However, after a few months I was able to carry on simple conversations in the dialect much to the delight of barrio friends who had many hearty laughs at my pronunciation. After six months I was able to check,

in a general manner, the interpretations made by my assistant and to discuss intelligently problems of translation of Cebuano into English. I also could carry on more detailed conversations with the people. 123

I made wide use of the available records of Siaton municipality. Unfortunately, most of the pre-war municipal records were lost when the municipio was burned during the last war. However, the records of the Roman Catholic church (which went back to the middle of the 19th century) had been preserved during the war. Through the kindness of the parish priest, I was able to examine them. Only a cursory survey was possible of the Spanish records kept in the Recollect convento (residence of the priests) in Dumaguete City. Various provincial records were consulted or summaries obtained through the courtesy of officials. The resources of the National Library in Manila and the collection of books and manuscripts supervised by H. Otley Beyer were used as time permitted. 127

During the two years it took to write this study, I frequently wrote to my former colleague[1] in Siaton for information. He was able to check certain dubious points or gather additional information on minor aspects that I had overlooked or failed to collect sufficient data. The material was sent to me with the names of the informants, their residence, and often their unabridged comments. The people, for the most part, did not know that Mr. Ragay was gathering information for me. 124 115

[1] [i.e. Ragay -- Analyst]

unwelcome addition to the generally meatless diet of the barriofolk.[2]

Hunting wild pig is a strenuous, often dangerous, task. One may trot behind barking dogs for hours, up and down hills, across ravines, through tangled undergrowth and knife-like dry grass. When the exhausted pig is cornered it is vicious. Now and then a hunter is badly mauled and frequently dogs are killed by a wounded pig. There are stories of hunters killed by a wild boar (tangwan) but such tragedies are rare.[3] The following incident describes a hunt that occurred in the vicinity of Barrio Cahangahan.

> One time my brother and I and two other people went out hunting wild pigs. Our dogs found a scent of a wild pig and the chase began. After two hours of chasing the tangwan that had badly

[2]Every Christmas season the young people of Caticugan carol for the residents of the barrio and the poblacion. The donations of money or food they receive are used for a party. One group of fourteen young men in 1952 decided instead of contributing chickens for the party to hunt wild pigs and donate whatever meat they killed. The group, with twenty-two dogs, was able to kill, in one morning, four pigs that each weighed from thirty to forty-five pounds.

[3]I never participated in a wild pig hunt. Several times I was invited to accompany a group on a hunt but refused on the basis that a previous operation (I exhibited my scar!) made it impossible for me to trot after the dogs for hours. This was not true but I was rather certain I could not maintain the necessary pace for a hunt. I did not wish to endanger my position among the young men by becoming an object of humorous ridicule. Gathering information on the hunting of wild pigs was not difficult except for the data on the blood--which I would not have been permitted, most likely, to witness had I participated in a hunt.

catch fish in the sea and the money necessary to construct a fish corral.

PELAGIC FISHING: INTRODUCTION

The South Mindanao Sea is considered one of the richest fishing grounds in the Philippines, according to Dr. Villadolid, Director, Bureau of Fisheries. This section describes the methods of catching fish, types caught, and commercial aspects of pelagic fishing. In the past, cattle was the "big business" of Siaton municipality. Today, with the depletion of the herds during the last war, the fish corral has become the municipality's "big business."[31]

Four major methods of catching sea fish are used in Siaton municipality. First, the bonsod or bongsod (fish corral); second, various types of twine or abaca nets; third, the bobo fish trap; and fourth, hook and line fishing from small boats. As has been noted previously, piscicides cannot be considered a major method of catching pelagic fish in Siaton.

[31] I did not live in a fishing barrio. However, I spent a great deal of time in Baybay and Malabuhan, often staying in the villages for several days at the time, observing and talking with the residents. Most commercial fishermen lived in the poblacion. Mr. Francisco Baldebrin, vice mayor of the municipality, was one of my most intelligent and willing informants; he managed several fish corrals off Baybay. Other fishermen such as Mr. Pedro Solde and Carding Alonzo, Malabuhan, spent a great deal of time with me, showing me their equipment and explaining their work. For comparative data on Philippine fish traps, types of nets, etc., vide Agustin F. Umali, Guide to the Classification of Fishing Gear in the Philippines. Research Report 17. Washington, D. C., Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior, Government Printing Office, 1950.

51:Hart E-3 (1950-1952)1954 OA1 Philippines
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796 121 123 presents preliminary notes on the rural fiesta complex as observed in Negros Oriental province during 1950-52. The information on the fiesta was obtained through participant observation, interviewing of informants, a careful analysis of scores of printed fiesta programs, and other published materials.

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796 177 The fiesta complex was brought to the Philippines by the Spanish conquerors of the archipelago in the 16th century. All fiestas originally corresponded to church feasts listed on the Catholic calendar " . . . and were, whatever they have now turned out to be, originally intended solely to do honor to the patron saints of the towns of King Philip's Catholic colony."[3] During the following centuries the fiesta was reinterpreted by the Filipinos. The event came to fill a sociocultural void created by the priests' suppression of ancient pagan ceremonies, to increase the religious education of the *tao* and the church's position among the people, and whether it was an original purpose or not, soon became a profitable financial venture for the Church.

771 Most rural Filipinos regard their patron saint as the "guardian" of their *barrio* or *poblacion*, watching over their health, households and general welfare. The patron saint is normally in the background of community affairs in the *barrios*, if less so in the *poblacions*, except during the fiesta period, when the *poblacions* also render special homage to their [789] saint. In periods of crises, crop failures, lack of rain, epidemics, etc., the patron saint may be turned to for aid, particularly by the barrio folk. During the writer's residence in Siaton, the people of Caticugan carried their patron saint (San Isidro) around the barrio, singing and praying, in hope of producing a badly needed rain for their parched crops. Ordinarily, however, the patron saint does not have such an important place in the daily routine of the people as during the annual fiesta. Yet, for many of the Filipinos, the mere fact that a patron saint exists must give them a diffused feeling of security.

796 This article cannot fully explore the modifications made by Filipinos on the original fiesta complex of the Spaniards. However, certain obvious and important reinterpretations will be pointed out.

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[3] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

In a survey of the fiestas of Negros Island the four frequently selected patron saints were: (1) San Isidro de Labrador; (2) Santo Niño; (3) San Jose; and (4) Sta. Cruz. San Isidro is the patron saint of farmers, a fact which probably explains, in part, his popularity. Male saints are, by far, the most popular, probably because there are more male than female saints in the Catholic faith.